

there can be no question that his heart lies in his hometown, and his commitment to the town's future will remain steadfast. Madam Speaker, I want to thank you for this opportunity to Dennis Mead in this manner, and I know that you join me and the rest of our colleagues in wishing Dennis the best of luck and Godspeed in all of his future endeavors.

IN RECOGNITION OF LEON N.
WEINER & ASSOCIATES INC.

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 15, 2008

Mr. CASTLE. Madam Speaker, it is my great pleasure to rise today in honor of Leon N. Weiner & Associates Inc. (LNW&AI), a company that for almost 60 years now has been accomplishing great feats and doing outstanding work for the housing industry in Delaware and surrounding areas. Today, I wish to call attention to a neighborhood renewal project this group championed. It positively impacted our community to such a degree that the readers of Affordable Housing Finance Magazine named it the Nation's best affordable homeownership development.

Leon N. Weiner & Associates Inc. was presented with this prestigious award because they had the vision, drive, prowess and compassion to take an area in need of revitalization and transform it into a true community. Less than a decade ago the Wilmington, Delaware neighborhood now known as Eastlake was home to some of the highest per capita drug and crime rates in the nation. All of that has changed since LNW&AI came in with an innovative renewal plan to construct new homes at below-market rates for neighbors. While designing this community, LNW&AI was mindful of practicality, community, affordability, safety, and aesthetics—all of which help explain the program's great success. Through the work of LNW&AI and its project affiliates, the Village of Eastlake is now seeing an unprecedented influx of residents that are inspired and committed to bettering their community and future.

I have long been a supporter of Leon N. Weiner & Associates Inc. Leon Weiner, whom I had the distinct privilege of knowing and working with while he was alive, founded the company in 1949 and made it a success. He recognized that people from every walk of life, regardless of economic circumstances, share a common need and dream of having a place to call home. His hard work and dedication to such a cause helped put thousands of people of modest incomes in homes. Furthermore, he established a rich philanthropic legacy within LNW&AI. Through my personal experiences with Leon's successors: Kevin Kelly and David Curtis, as well as the rest of the LNW&AI staff, I can assuredly say that Leon's legacy not only lives on, but thrives in the company today.

Once again, I would like to recognize Leon N. Weiner & Associates Inc. Their work at the Eastlake community is remarkable and very deserving of Affordable Housing Finance Magazine's Reader's Choice Award. They are an invaluable asset to our community and I wish them all the best now and in the future.

HONORING THE LIFE OF HON.
RICHARD F. "RIC" WILLIAMSON

HON. JOHN L. MICA

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 15, 2008

Mr. MICA. Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a wonderful friend and a great leader in transportation, both in Texas and our Nation, the Hon. Richard F. ("Ric") Williamson. His sudden passing on December 30, 2007 was an incredible loss to his family, the State of Texas and our country.

It has been my honor to know and work with Ric during his service as Texas Commissioner of Transportation. From our first meeting, I knew I had a found a friend, a leader, and a key supporter of building our Nation's infrastructure. Rick's passing is a tremendous loss to all those who respected his leadership and brilliance in government's important work to build the national transportation system. I join the Texas Congressional Delegation and all who knew and worked with Ric in extending our sincere condolences to his wife and family.

As chairman of the Texas Transportation Commission, Ric crafted creative, major, and often controversial decisions about the future of the State's transportation system. He was a strong proponent of toll roads and public-private partnerships as a solution to meet the State's transportation needs and funding shortfalls.

Ric's policies and positions were always well thought-out and passionately defended. He always did what he thought would best serve the transportation needs of the State, and many believe that his support for public-private partnerships was instrumental in inspiring other States to consider similar deals as a way to finance new highway construction or to provide long-range, predictable State revenues.

Ric was a native of Abilene, Texas and graduated from University of Texas at Austin in 1974. In 1985, Ric was elected to the Texas Legislature, as a Democrat, and served 13 years until he left in 1998 as a Republican. Serving on the legislature's House Appropriations Committee, he was one of the "Pit Bulls," conservative lawmakers who questioned how the state spent its money. He believed that agencies should get money based on the goals they set and met, a concept known as performance-based budgeting, which is used today in the Texas budget process.

During his State House years, Ric was known as a maverick, and earned the nickname "Nitro" for his energy. He was an independent and aggressive leader who preferred making good policy over playing politics.

In 2001, Governor Perry appointed Ric to serve on the five-person Commission that oversees statewide activities of the Texas Department of Transportation. In 2004, he became the Commission's chairman. His tenure at the Commission was sometimes controversial, but, as my friend and colleague from the 26th district in Texas, Dr. Michael Burgess, said, Ric Williamson was "unafraid to challenge the status quo, and was a highly regarded leader bringing innovative ideas to provide safe, economic and reliable transportation to improve the daily lives of Texans."

Ric is survived by his wife Mary Ann Williamson and three daughters, Melissa Meyer, Katherine Strange, and Sara Williamson, as well as two grandchildren.

In closing, I will quote another friend of Ric's, the Administrator of the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. "Texas has lost a proud son, as has the nation's transportation community." Ric Williamson was a visionary leader and a straight talker. He will be sorely missed.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF JOHN
MICHAEL GRANVILLE, AN AMERICAN DIPLOMAT

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 15, 2008

Mr. HIGGINS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to an outstanding citizen of Buffalo and Western New York, John Michael Granville, an American diplomat who devoted his adult life to promoting peace through his foreign aid and humanitarian work in Africa.

John Granville, who worked for the U.S. Agency for International Development (US AID) in Sudan, was fatally shot after attending a party at the British Embassy in Khartoum. His sudden passing is a great shock to us all and my thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends at this very difficult time. In this senseless tragedy, we lost a man of peace and purpose, a man who had dedicated himself to making the world a better place for others.

John Granville was a thoughtful and honorable man who was deeply loved by his family, friends and the community. Born and raised in my hometown of Buffalo, NY, John Granville was an outstanding young man. We are proud to salute John and honor him for his lasting service to our nation and to countries abroad and for the important humanitarian work he was doing in Africa.

John was a graduate of Canisius High School, Fordham University and held a Master's degree in International Development from Clark University. The John M. Granville '93 Memorial Scholarship has been established at his high school alma mater in his memory as family, friends and classmates want to make sure he will never be forgotten.

Before joining USAID, John served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Cameroon, where he helped build the first school in a rural village. His love for Africa and the people of Africa was realized during his years of service there. John's most recent work involved distributing radios to people in the southern part of Sudan to maximize the effect of the agency's broadcasting initiatives in Sudan's southern region, which is recovering from a 21-year civil war. The goal was to prepare southern Sudan for elections in 2009, and a possible referendum in 2011 on independence.

We know John will be missed beyond measure by his loving mother, Jane, his beloved sister Katie and brother-in law Sean, his loving nieces Caroline, Julia, Hanna and Molly and nephew Matthew, his extended family and dear friends. Everyone who knew or was influenced by John will mourn his loss in their own way. I will do my part to honor John's memory